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THE GOVERNESS IS MARRIED, AND FINDS A HAPPY HOME.

WANTED, A GOVERNESS.

CHAP. IV.—MY LAST SITUATION AND MY SECOND HOME.

SEVERAL weeks passed away, when I was surprised one day by a visit from my new friend Miss Donne.

"I am come, my dear," said she, "to make a
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little proposal to you. Will you like to go and live with one of my old pupils?"

I could not at first speak for joy, but afterwards exclaimed: "Yes, oh yes! any one that you have taught."

HHH

"My dear"—and here Miss Donne looked grave—"I do not think you were made for a governess."

"Why not, Miss Donne?"

"You are too enthusiastic—governesses must not show all they feel; too hopeful—governesses must not have too much hope; but come, for all that, I think you will make a tolerable one; only do not hope too much. This pupil was one of my first, remember, and she was not trained in the very best possible school for the treatment of dependents; but she is a dear, warm-hearted child. By-the-by, she is thirty now: she has married a good man, and if she errs towards you, it will be as she always erred, from want of reflection. But she lives a long way off: can you reconcile yourself to this?"

"On your recommendation, yes."

Preliminaries were soon settled. On my friend's testimony I was at once accepted, and prepared to set forth on my journey the following week.

A long journey has no terrors to a young mind. I was rather delighted than otherwise with the prospect of seeing new places, and I do not think that, sorrowful as had been my past experience of a governess's life, I had any misgivings about the future. It was hard work to bid Agnes farewell, for it seemed scarcely possible that we should ever meet again, and she hung round me sadly, until a bright thought appearing to strike her, lit up her pale face with heavenly beauty, and her farewell words were: "If I die—and it may be soon—I would wish to become your guardian angel."

I was to travel under no care but my own, and I was tired of the railway journey long before I caught a glimpse of the venerable minister of York. My new home lay in a small village near Darlington, that pretty, dull, quakerly-looking town. I was met at the station there, and escorted by a bald-headed, elderly gentleman, with a pleasant, benevolent face, to a little pony-phæton which he had brought for me, and in a few minutes we were rolling away towards my new home.

It was a lovely evening towards the close of July. A little summer lightning played in the horizon; but the air was as still and peaceful as though nothing could ever trouble nature more; the lightning seemed but a *warning*, and whilst my own heart partook of the same quiet influence, I could not but think that God had been very good to me in this promise of rest after all my troubles.

My companion did not talk much: it was evidently not natural to him to be loquacious; but all he said was uttered in a gentlemanly pleasant tone, and it did not occur to me that he felt himself condescending. Once, just as he had pointed out the gothic chimneys of the parsonage-house, where my new lot was to be cast, he said: "They will be very good to you; my daughter-in-law has a kind heart, you need not fear. It will be strange at first, but try and look on it as your home."

A few moments more and we were at a light iron gate. Two lovely little girls of nine and ten years old were there to meet me, and behind them were—I was frightened to think how many little children, for I remembered the juvenile toilette at N—. The mother was in the hall, and her smile was in itself a welcome. She took me herself into

the pretty room prepared for me, with its neat white bed, clean muslin curtains and toilet-cover.

"This is to be quite your own," she said. "I am not very rich in rooms, but I can spare you this; the school-room is opposite, and the children's bedroom is through that. I hope you will be comfortable, but it is sad work leaving home;" and extending her hand to me again, she left the room, for she saw my heart was full. Kindness sometimes swells those springs to overflowing which cold neglect would freeze up.

After a little time a child's voice was heard at the door: "Please, Miss Maitland, will you come down to tea." I could not but be struck with the tone of politeness—a tone which even a child may be taught to adopt.

They were all very kind to me, and it was some comfort to feel that I was with one of Miss Donne's pupils. Mrs. Kenway asked me when I had seen her, how she looked, and a great deal more about her. Then I had to tell the story of our first acquaintance, and its singular renewal; and I did not wonder that Miss Donne should call Mrs. Kenway, even at thirty, her dear child. There was a brightness and buoyancy of manner, and a loving child-like simplicity, which inspired me with love and confidence at once. I should have mentioned that Mr. Kenway was a clergyman. We have all our ideas of what a country clergyman should be, and perhaps even go so far as to settle how he should look. A more beautiful picture of a father of a family and flock I thought then, and I think now, I have never seen than in Mr. K. Graver than his wife, and some years older, he seemed to possess precisely the qualities which she lacked, and which were needed for the symmetry of the pillars of the house. He looked at me so compassionately, and with such infinite tenderness, that I could almost fancy him blessing me as he took my hand; and at the hour of evening prayer, how touching were the petitions for the stranger! There was no appearance of luxury in our home; but I soon discovered, from the many visitors of distinction that came from time to time to the pretty parsonage-house, that Mr. Kenway was well connected. I never heard, however, a depreciating word, or a proud expression pass his calm lips, nor experienced from him, during the whole period of my residence in his family, any other treatment than a sister might meet with from a brother, or a child from a parent. Yet do not mistake me. I felt him and his gentle wife to be my superiors, and my respect was heightened by their condescension. Even now I cannot but be grateful for the generosity of the Kenways, when I remember how much they had to teach me, how they refrained from expressing the disappointment, which I am sure they often felt, in the want of firmness in my religious principles, on which they justly considered all education should be based; but they were very patient, very charitable, and I can never sufficiently thank the Providence which directed me to such a school of holy example and practical piety. The same spirit pervaded the children and the servants. There was no lack of respect from either, and many a time I have asked myself, "Is not this too bright to last?" Mrs. Kenway was, it is true, quick in temper as in every thing, and sometimes she has brought the tears to my eyes for some impulsive remark, caused perhaps

by a neglect or an omission of mine; but she never failed to make up for it by increased kindness and affection, and was never happy until she saw that every trace of my grief had passed away.

The first cloud that shadowed my peace at D— was the death of dear Agnes. She passed away one night in sleep, and the news came upon me with a sudden and overwhelming shock. I took the letter tearfully to Mrs. Kenway, who was at that moment busy projecting a little journey to the lakes, with her husband and the eldest of my pupils. It was seldom that the good mother left her young family, and I had been rejoicing with her in the prospect of a fortnight's freedom from household cares, and anticipating with mingled feelings of timidity and girlish joy the honours of housekeeping during her absence. I gave her the open letter. She looked at me with just such a look as my mother might have given, and drawing me down until my head rested on her bosom, she bade me weep there. She then darkened the little sitting-room, told me I should be quite alone and undisturbed, and went in search of Henry, as she said, to comfort me. One by one the little ones came in to give a silent kiss, and the second girl, a delicate, lame little child who always reminded me of Agnes, said: "What a happy day it will be when you meet her again, dear Miss Maitland."

Soon Mr. Kenway came in: he did not try to check my grief, but he spoke with such heavenly wisdom and comfort of the good and benefit of affliction, that I soon found myself calm and peaceful, and when I was left alone the influence of his gentle consolation remained, and spread like oil on the troubled waters. Mrs. Kenway then took his place. I was not left too long alone, and there was not a sound in the house to testify that it was *inconvenient* to them that their governess should be in sorrow and retirement.

I joined the family at supper, when Mr. Kenway kindly handed me an envelope, and said: "We thought, of course, you would like to go home. It is a long way, and will be a sorrowful journey; but it will be a comfort to you and your mother, and therefore your duty." The envelope contained the money for my railway fare. I could not speak for some time, and then I told him, as well as I was able, that I could not think of hindering his journey and Mrs. Kenway's. She rose and closed my lips with a kiss. I felt that she was sincere, and accepted her offered kindness.

I need not detail the meeting at my bereaved home. It had never appeared so desolate as on the night of my sister's funeral. It was our mother's first maternal grief, and she longed—oh, with what unutterable longing—for that heart, now cold in death, in which to pour out that deepest of mortal anguish. Still there was comfort in our sorrow. Agnes had long been ripe for heaven, and the guardian spirit of our gentle sainted one seemed to hover over our mourning hearth that night.

I returned to my new home—for I could now call it such—at the expiration of a month. I had then been a year in my new and happy situation, and had been able to send home half of my salary of 40*l.* to my mother. If any one had told me that I could ever repay the kindness of my dear friends by distrust or want of confidence, I should

have repelled the suspicion with indignation; but there is a mischievous little fellow, the author of much confusion, misunderstanding, and mistake in family circles, who, in his very blindness, often leads unwary ones away, and on one occasion of my life he had drawn me very near a pit.

Of course, as governesses are but women, and often young women too, it is to be expected that they should be liable to that natural weakness of woman, popularly called "falling in love." It is to be lamented that the want of confidence between the employer and the employed, in many cases, prevents that interchange of thought and feeling which would often be so useful to the young inexperienced girl, deprived of a mother's wise and tender counsel. I, however, had not this excuse; and had I been convinced of the rightness of my course, it would all have been laid open before my guardians; but I am anticipating.

The circumstances under which I first became acquainted with Charles Harris—which, I beg to tell every one who bears that name, was not the true name of my lover—were these. The Kenways were gone out on the little tour which my sister's death and funeral had for a time postponed, and I was left mistress of the parsonage. Old Mr. Kenway, who resided with us, was at home; but all the management and care devolved on me. One day, according to an old promise, I and the two elder children were to spend the day in a lovely dale about five miles from Darlington, with an old couple who had known the children's papa, as they loved to tell, when he wore little white frocks and a coral and bells. The old lady had been housekeeper, and the gentleman house-steward to Mr. Kenway's father, and they now lived in a snug Yorkshire farm, well-to-do in the world, and with as few cares as ever pressed on mortal hearts. In the summer time they let lodgings, too, to artists and collegians. To the one class it afforded ample materials for the sketch-book, and to the other the tempting streams furnished fish for the most inveterate of anglers. The scenery was lovely, and the retirement the most perfect that could be desired. It was a regular nursery, too, for the young Kenways after all infantile disorders; and I soon found the children were at home at once with Christie, good Meggie Crossthwaite's husband. I discovered, too, that both to him and to them my company would spoil the pleasure of their farm-yard rambles, without being productive of much to myself; I therefore let them pursue their accustomed sports under his care, finding that this was the established order of things.

We arrived at the farm by ten in the morning, having risen very early, and finding Meggie's kitchen hot, and the smell of the oat-cakes overpowering, I resolved to sally forth alone in search of some of the beauties of which I had often heard so rapturous a description. I had not far to wander. The pretty clear rushing stream was my guide, and I followed its course for nearly half a mile, when, considering that I ought not to forsake my charge for too long a period, I sat down to rest and to give myself up to enjoyment. Thoughts of the dead are mysteriously interwoven in our nature with the finest and most elevated of its aspirations. It happens that the soul,

when powerfully excited by aught that is beautiful in sound or sight, at once goes forth to the spirit-land, and begins a communion with those who dwell there. There is a link unseen indeed, but firm and indissoluble, between souls on earth and souls in heaven. Agnes was very present with me that day; but I had need of a stronger guardian angel than Agnes, though I knew it not. Suddenly I perceived the figure of a young man seated on the bank at a little distance from me, his line idly dangling from a tree, his sketch-book lying open at his side, his attitude one of perfect indolence and a lazy content therein. Before I was aware of it he was at my side, and in ten minutes more he was talking to me with the ease and freedom of a perfect citizen of the world. To my surprise, he entered the farm with me, and in reply to my questioning look, he said: "I am a lodger here; and now, Mrs. Crossthwaite, will you let me share the hospitality of your dinner-table to-day? You don't often give dinner-parties on a scale of such magnificence as I see you are preparing; and here is the trout for my share of the entertainment." Good Meggie was only too glad to be spared the trouble of preparing another dinner, and the young man was soon in excellent humour.

"I must go and see for the children," I said at last; for, amused as I had been by the rattle of my companion, I could not but ask myself how it would sound at the parsonage, and what Mr. Kenway would think of my acquaintance; but Mr. Harris was at my side in a moment. "We will go together," he said.

We were together all day, and I remained so late in the evening that Christie himself urged our departure, and Charles Harris volunteered to escort us home on horseback.

It was a foolish business; I am ashamed to write it; I did not love him, but I was flattered by his attentions, and did not discourage them as I ought to have done. The next Sunday afternoon he was at church, and scarcely a day passed without my encountering his horse in some of our walks and rides. But this I knew must end before the Kenways' return; and oh, how I wished that I could summon courage to tell Mrs. Kenway, and ask her advice about the acquaintance. I am sure her quick eye discerned a change in me on her return, for after the first words of warm greeting were over, I could not but discover that her face sought mine in a mild, questioning, half-doubtful manner. Once she asked me if I were happy, but I evaded the question; and Mrs. Kenway, who was easily chilled, pursued the subject no further.

One evening, about a week after their return, as we sat at tea, I felt violently excited by the appearance of old Christie, on his stout Yorkshire mare, coming up our gravel drive, his face looking very solemn and portentous. He came to speak to Mr. Kenway too, and I augured ill from his visit. It did not last long, however. He went into the kitchen for refreshment, and Mr. Kenway returned to his tea without making any comment on the purport of the interview. I thought he looked at me once, but I might be mistaken.

A day or two passed and I began to think Christie's visit had nothing to do with me; but, on the Sunday evening, Mr. Kenway asked me to accom-

pany him to a school-room, where he and another clergyman alternately conducted an evening service, and I could not refuse. He at once opened the subject, and gravely but tenderly expostulated with me on the want of proper candour in receiving the attention of a perfect stranger. He said he had taken no notice of the matter until he had learned some particulars of the youth's connections and habits, and that he grieved to say, his morals and character were of the loosest description, and that Christie had been compelled to give his lodger notice to quit, owing to a report of his misconduct in the neighbouring village.

I do not know how it was; but the calm, grave way in which Mr. Kenway demolished my airy castles, irritated my pride, and I replied somewhat brusquely. We pursued the rest of our walk in silence; but when we entered the little sanctuary, those words, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," melted mine at once, and I wept like a child. Our walk home, which was for some time in silence, was at last broken by my expressions of sorrow, and well and tenderly did my kind and judicious counsellor pour in the balm of comfort. Not one reproach for my breach of trust, not one indignant expression at my concealment, was suffered to fall from his lips. His anxiety seemed all for myself. He judged rightly that it was not the time to dwell on the importance of my stability for his children's sake.

When I arrived at home, Mrs. Kenway was sitting alone. The last of the elder children was in bed; and, as Mr. Kenway entered his study, I had an opportunity of telling his dear wife all. The mother's love peeped out through all her kindness to me, and she could not refrain from saying: "Think what a solemn trust it is, dear Miss Maitland, the charge of those innocent children. You will never abuse it more, will you?" I could only answer with my tears, and we were reconciled. It was the turning-point in my life. Unkindness and harshness would have made me reckless; but the wise parental care, the unselfish appeal to my own interests and good, won me to confidence and trust in them ever after.

The dear mother of the little family was subsequently laid on a sick-bed for many months; but thanks to Him who now directed my path, I could always meet her eye without fear. All was openness between us. Our love was sealed with many sorrows. Death entered our peaceful home, and sickness and trial often; but my interests were theirs, and theirs were mine. I held but a secondary place in their family, it is true. I was their servant still. I did not forget that; but neither did they forget that I was their children's educator, and as such entitled to their love and honour.

And so time passed on. My mother was taken away; but God had anticipated the loss in giving me a father, and a mother too, in those dear Kenways; and I am a wife now—a wife in his pleasant parish. He joined my hands with those of his own curate only two years ago, and he it was who gave me the father's blessing. The little girls still come to me for tuition, and still call me their "governess." It is a dear and an honoured name—no longer one of reproach—no longer fraught with bitterness. You should hear them,

reader, say those words, "Our dear governess;" you should hear Mrs. Kenway introduce me as her old governess; and oh, you (if any such should read these pages) who have lived all your lives long in an incessant warfare with the race—you should know that they are capable of a love to your children, strong and only second in tenderness to the mother's, and that it rests with you whether, by the touch of kindness, you will awaken that affection, or, by neglect and coldness, you will chill your inmate's soul and render it all but incapable of love.

But, my sisters, one word in conclusion to you. Beware how you undertake the great work of education. If you are conscious that your own, whether of heart or of mind, has been neglected, do not venture to make experiments on young and tender souls, and so educate yourself at their expense. Better and more honourable to be measuring out ribbon and weighing pins behind a counter, to be waiting on the whims of a gentlewoman, to be nurse to the sick, or housekeeper to the rich—than to run the risk of tampering with the mind and hearts of the young. Not every one is born for teaching; and, whilst we cannot but condemn the system too often pursued to our class, we would call upon you all to raise it to its rightful dignity, and to remember that only a governess who can really fulfil that which she engages to do is worthy of the respect and confidence of her employers.

ROBERT NICOLL.

[SECOND PAPER.]

WHEN the period arrived at which Nicoll's apprenticeship closed, he found his intellectual tastes so engrossing, that, notwithstanding the dissuaves of his prudent literary friends in Edinburgh, he was eager rather to obtain any occupation connected with books than continue the sale of groceries. Accordingly, with some pecuniary aid, principally from his mother, he contrived to open a circulating library in Dundee. He occupied himself, also, in writing a good deal for the newspapers, and occasionally delivered lectures on political subjects.

The year 1835 was an eventful one in the young poet's life. First, he must needs fall in love. The fair winner of his heart, afterwards his wife, was a Miss Alice Suter, a niece of the editor of one of the papers for which Nicoll wrote, and a sweet, gentle, loving woman, with as warm a heart to bestow as that which she received. Then comes the publication of his volume of poems and lyrics. His judicious literary friends in Edinburgh endeavoured to dissuade him from this step as premature—advice, the wisdom of which he afterwards acknowledged. But meanwhile his ardour could not be repressed. He obtained a number of subscribers in Dundee, chiefly intelligent young working men, had the work printed at one of the newspaper presses in that town, and to his great delight found a publisher in Mr. Tait of Edinburgh. The book was well received; the modest author was more than satisfied; while the approbation of the press, he said, was far above the merits of his work. The reader of the following

lines, which we give by way of specimen, will not think high praise extravagant when applied to such verses.

A DAY AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

"Come, sit by your father's knee,

My son,

On the seat by your father's door,
And the thoughts of your youthful heart,

My son,

Like a stream of gladness pour;
For, afar 'mong the lonely hills,

My son,

Since the morning thou hast been;
Now tell me thy bright day-dreams,

My son,

Yea, all thou hast thought and seen!"

"When morn aboon yon eastern hill

Had raised its glimmering e'e,

I hied me to the heather hills,

Where gorlocks crawling flee;

And ere the laverock sought the lift

Frae out the dewy dens,

I wandering was by mountain-streams

In lane and hoary glens.

"Auld frowning rocks on either hand

Uprear'd their heads to heaven,

Like temple-pillars which the foot

Of Time had crush'd and riven;

And voices frae ilk mossy stane

Upon my ear did flow;

They spake o' Nature's secrets a',

The tales o' long ago.

"The daisy, frae the burnie's side,

Was looking up to God;

The crag that crown'd the towering peak

Seem'd kneeling on the sod:

A sound was in ilk dowie glen

And on ilk naked rock,

On mountain-peak, in valley lone;

And holy words it spoke.

"The nameless flowers that budded up,

Each beauteous desert child,

The heather's scarlet blossoms spread

O'er many a lanely wild;

The lambkins, sporting in the glens,

The mountains old and bare,

Seem'd worshipping, and there with them

I breathed my morning prayer.

"Alang, o'er monie a mountain-tap—

Alang, through monie a glen—

Wi' Nature haudin' fellowship

I journey'd far frae men.

Now suddenly a lonely tarn

Would burst upon my eye;

An' whiles frae out the solitudes

Would come the breezes' cry.

"At noon, I made my grassy couch

Beside a hzunted stream;

A bonnie bloomin' bush o' broom

Waved o'er me in my dream.

I laid me there in slumberous joy

Upon the giant knee

Of yonder peak, that seem'd to bend

In watching over me.

"I dream'd a bonnie, bonnie dream,

As sleepin' there I lay:—

I thought I brightly round me saw

The fairy people stray.

I dreamt they back again had come

To live in glen and wold,

To sport in dells 'neath harvest moons,

As in the days of old.

"I saw them dance upo' the breeze,

An' hide within the flower,

Sing bonnie and unearthly sangs,

An' skim the lakelets o'er!

That hour the beings o' the past,
Of ages lost an' gone,
Came back to earth, an' grot an' glen
Were peopled every one!

"The vision fled, and I awoke:—
The sun was sinkin' down;
The mountain-birds frae hazels brown
Had sung their gloamin' tune;
The dew was sleepin' on the leaf,
The breezes on the flower;
And Nature's heart was beating calm—
It was the evening hour.

"And, father, when the moon arose,
Upon a mountain-height,
I stood and saw the brow of earth
Bound wi' its silver light.
Nae sound came on the watching ear
Upon that silent hill;
My e'en were filled with tears, the hour
Sae holy was and still!

"There was a lowly mound o' green
Beside me rising there—
A pillow where a bairn might kneel,
And say its twilight prayer.
The moonlight kiss'd the gladsome flowers
That o'er that mound did wave;
Then I remember'd that I stood
Beside the martyrs' grave!

"I knelt upon that hallow'd earth,
While memory pictured o'er
The changing scenes, the changing thoughts,
That day had held in store.
And then my breast w' gladness swell'd,
And God in love did bless:
He gave me, 'mang auld Scotland's hills,
A day of happiness!"

Amidst all these pleasant occurrences Nicoll had, however, the mortification to find that business did not prosper. Economical and prudent as he was, he rather lost than gained by his library, and soon resolved to give up the concern and seek employment in the great metropolis. Poor fellow, he had many cares hanging heavily on his young heart; but he met them with a spirit nerved and disciplined beyond what might be expected at his years. To his mother he writes: "That money of R.'s* hangs like a millstone about my neck. If I had it paid, I would never borrow again from mortal man. But do not mistake me, mother; I am not one of those men who faint and falter in the great battle of life. God has given me too strong a heart for that. I look upon earth as a place where every man is set to struggle and to work, that he may be made humble and fit for that better land for which earth is a preparation—to which earth is the gate. Cowardly is that man who bows before the storm of life, who runs not the needful race manfully, and with a cheerful heart. If men would but consider how little of *real* evil there is in all the ills of which they are so much afraid—poverty included—there would be more virtue and happiness, and less world and mammon-worship on earth than there is. I think, mother, that to me has been given talent; and, if so, that talent was given to make it useful to man. To man it cannot be made a source of happiness, unless it be cultivated; and cultivated it cannot be unless I think little of [here some words are obliterated] and much and well of purifying the

soul. This is my philosophy, and its motto is—

'Despair, thy name is written on
The roll of common men.'

Half the unhappiness of life springs from looking back to griefs which are past, and forward with fear to the future. That is not my way. I am determined never to bend to the storm that is coming, and never to look back on it after it has passed. Fear not for me, dear mother, for I feel myself daily growing firmer, and more hopeful in spirit. The more I think and reflect—and thinking, instead of reading, is now my occupation—I feel that, whether I be growing richer or not, I am growing a wiser man, which is far better. Pain, poverty, and all the other wild beasts of life which so affright others, I am so bold as to think I could look in the face without shrinking, without losing respect for myself, faith in man's high destinies, and trust in God. There is a point which it costs much internal toil and struggling to gain, but which, when once gained, a man can look down from, as a traveller from a lofty mountain on storms raging below, while he is walking in sunshine. That I have yet gained this point in life I will not say, but I feel myself daily nearer it."

Nicoll's design of going to London was strongly opposed by his Edinburgh friends, till some certain prospect of employment there could be found for him. Meanwhile, Mr. Tait gave him occupation in his own warehouse. But, ere many months had elapsed, Nicoll obtained, through means of the same kind friend, the situation of editor of the "Leeds Times." The salary was only 100*l.* a year, but the young editor entered on his work with great delight. With his political sentiments it is not our province to interfere, further than to say, that even those who think them violent and extreme—and some of the wisest and best will do so—cannot but acknowledge the sincerity with which they were held, and the genuine ardour of the young writer to aid in making "the world better." To a fellow editor, somewhat similarly circumstanced with himself, Nicoll writes: "What you say of newspaper-writing is true—true as truth itself; but you forget one part. It would, indeed, be hangman's work to write articles one day to be forgotten to-morrow, if this were all; but you forget the comfort—the repayment. If one prejudice is overthrown, one error rendered untenable; if but one step in advance be the consequence of your articles and mine—the consequences of the labour of all true men—are we not deeply repaid?"

In August, 1836, Nicoll entered on his Leeds engagement. In December of the same year he was married. A few very bright months followed, for his economical little home was full of the sunshine of the heart. But he was working too hard for even a strong man, and far too hard for his delicate constitution. Besides conducting his own paper, he wrote regularly the leading article for a Sheffield newspaper. And poetry also had its precious moments. Most of the posthumous pieces, upwards of fifty in number, which have appeared in the later editions of Nicoll's poems, were written during this busy year in Leeds, hastily sketched in pencil. In the spring and summer months symptoms of failing health appeared, and

* A small sum which he had borrowed when about to open his library in Dundee.

in the autumn those symptoms, indicating consumption, became alarming. In October he removed for change of air to a friend's house at Knaresborough, whence he wrote to his brother William: "The length of time I have been ill and my weakness alone frighten me; but whether I am to die or live is in a wiser hand. I have been so long ill, I grow peevish and discontented sometimes; but on the whole I keep up my spirits wonderfully. Alice bears up, and hopes for the best, as she ought to do. Oh, Willie! I wish I had you here for one day—so much, much I have to say about them all, in case it should end for the worst. It may not, but we should be prepared. . . ."

"I have just received another letter from Tait, which made me weep with joy, and which will have the same effect upon you. He bids me send to him for money, if I need it; and urges me to leave Leeds and the paper instantly, and come to Edinburgh where there is a house ready for me; and there to live and attend to nothing but my health, till I get better. He urges me to this with a father's kindness, and bids me feel neither care nor anxiety on any account. . . . And so delicately, too, he offers and urges all this. How can I ever repay this man, and the Johnstones, for such kindness? Should I do this? I know not. You admire my articles; they are written almost in torment. . . . I wish my mother to come here immediately to consult with her. I wish to see her. I think a sight of her would cure me. I am sure a breath of Scottish air would."

The mother, eager to obey this summons, procured the money necessary for such a journey, by reaping in the harvest-field—a touching incident in the story of poor Grace's trials. It was no small aggravation of her son's distress, that the hopes he had so fondly cherished of aiding her and her family, and placing his parents in more comfortable circumstances, were now fading away. But no thoughts of self mingled with the poor mother's anguish.

Towards the end of October, Nicoll, accompanied by his wife, his mother, and his mother-in-law, reached Leith. They immediately took up their abode in Mr. Johnstone's house at Laverock Bank, the family being then in Edinburgh. Skilful physicians were called in, and for a few weeks hopes were entertained that the patient might rally. His mother, who could be ill spared from her little business, left him, and he was visited by his brother William and the dearly loved "only sister" of his verses. In the beginning of December he became rapidly worse, and his parents were hastily sent for. "Instantly, on receipt of the letter," writes Nicoll's biographer, "and at nightfall on a December day, they left their cottage at Tullibeltane, and, walking all night, reached Laverock Bank, a distance of fifty miles, on the afternoon of the following day, and but a few hours before their early called and gifted son, in whom they must have placed so much of mingled delight and hope, breathed his last breath. It is the poor only, it is those who are called upon to suffer and to sacrifice for each other, who have the high privilege of knowing to the full extent, how choice a thing is family affection."

Nicoll died in his twenty-fourth year; and it is

no small praise of his poetry to say that it is allowed to surpass in merit anything which Burns wrote at the same age. The poet of nature, of the social and domestic affections, and of the moral regeneration of society, Robert Nicoll has been designated. To himself, personally, the honour due to high rectitude of character and conduct cannot be denied. Still the enlightened Christian will desire more ample evidence than is yet before the world, that the basis on which he would build both personal religion and the moral regeneration of society, as well as the means which he would employ to promote them, were of that thoroughly evangelical order which from God's word we know can alone be successful. It is pleasing, indeed, to mark the high reverence with which he regarded that word, and his warm appreciation of its influence in raising his native land to the position it occupies. It is the Ha' Bible of the peasant's cottage which he thus addresses:—

"The mountains old and hoar,
The chainless winds, the streams so pure and free,
The God-enamell'd flowers,
The waving forest, the eternal sea,
The eagle floating o'er the mountain's brow,
Are teachers all; but, oh! they are not such as thou!

"Thou doubly-precious book!
Unto thy light what doth not Scotland owe:
Thou teachest age to die,
And youth in truth unsullied up to grow!
In lowly homes a comforter art thou—
A sunbeam sent from God—an everlasting bow!

"O'er thy broad, ample page
How many dim and aged eyes have pored:
How many hearts o'er thee
In silence deep and holy have adored:
How many mothers, by their infants' bed,
Thy holy, blessed, pure, child-loving words have read!

"And o'er thee soft young hands
Have oft in truthful plighted love been joined;
And thou to wedded hearts
Hast been a bond—an altar of the mind!
Above all kingly power or kingly law
May Scotland reverence aye—the Bible of the Ha'!"

A DAY AT WATERLOO.

It was my first visit to Belgium. I was on my way to the banks of the Rhine, there to recruit failing health, and to rest for a season from mental toil. Accompanied by my wife, I left London Bridge for Ostend early on the morning of Saturday, the 11th June, 1853. At eleven o'clock on the evening of the same day we found ourselves comfortably established in the Hotel de Brabant, Brussels. We could not think of pressing on to our destination without paying a visit to the field of Waterloo. On the morning of the 13th, accordingly, we found ourselves comfortably seated on a real English stage-coach, whose driver, with his white hat and neckcloth, gray surcoat, ruddy mottled cheeks, and bluff figure, presented the true type of an English coachman of the olden time; while, as his splendid team of horses swept over the pavement and ascended towards the Parc, an English guard with his bugle made the old streets ring cheerily to the notes of many a stirring English melody. Stopping at one or two of the hotels in the upper town to take up fresh passengers, we were soon outside the barriers, and

speeding on our way along the broad paved road, over which Wellington's artillery had passed on its way to the crowning conflicts of his stirring career. Looking to the south-west the eye fell on fields of waving corn. As we proceeded onwards a band of urchins issued from the cottages in the hope of receiving alms from the passengers. The girls held aloft little bouquets of wild flowers, and the boys as they ran revolved in that rotatory fashion which, in my simplicity, I had thought was a performance peculiar to the young gentlemen of the New Road and Gray's Inn Lane, London.

About three miles from Brussels we entered the forest of Soignies, and as the shadows of the tall fir-trees fell gloomily upon us, we remembered that through this forest the British troops had marched in the grey dawn of the 15th, on their way to Quatre Bras. It is in reference to this that the poet writes (mistaking "Ardennes" for "Soignies") the touching lines:—

"And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
O'er the unreturning brave—alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass,
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low."

About nine miles from Brussels we drove into the village of Waterloo, the name of which is imperishably associated with a battle which in reality was fought a considerable distance from it. It was, however, the head-quarters of the duke, where he was busy with his pen, as his published despatches show, so early as three o'clock of the morning of the engagement. In one of the letters then written, he says, addressing Sir Charles Stuart: "Pray keep the English (in Brussels) quiet, if you can. Let them all prepare to move, *but neither be in a hurry nor a fright, as all will yet turn out well.*"

In this brief note we have a specimen of the combined caution and courage by which the great captain was then and always distinguished. But, lest we anticipate, let us just glance at the brick church to the right, opposite to the duke's quarters, where marble tablets record the names of many gallant officers who perished in the fight, and then pass on our way.

At the distance of a mile we came to the village of Mount St. Jean, from which the French named the battle. Here we were set down at the door of a small inn. Upon our entrance we found ourselves addressed by several "guides," soliciting employment. The English guide was on the field with another party, and our choice therefore lay between two Belgians. A young gentleman, accordingly, who was the greatest traveller of our party, as well as the most fluent in the French tongue, selected for us a youth, who seemed to prevail over an older and more experienced claimant by dint of noisy importunity. After taking some refreshment we proceeded towards the field. Scarcely had we left the village when we came, on the left of the road, to a little cottage, the house of a deceased Belgian guide, where we found a collection of relics. Proceeding onward a quarter of a mile, we passed the farmhouse of Mount St.

Jean, which, with its large barn abutting on the high road, formed the chief hospital for the wounded, and witnessed the dying agonies of many brave fellows who survived the fight but a few days or hours—only, after all, to die.

And now, passing along, we see to the right and left the hollow swampy ground on which, amid torrents of rain, the British army bivouacked on the night of the 17th, and in whose shelter, behind the ridge in front, a large portion of the reserve was placed during the battle, completely hidden from the observation of the French. Up this gentle ridge we press. Suddenly we crown it, and standing at the crossing of a narrow country way, here intersecting the high road which we have been traversing, the field of Waterloo is before us?

"Stop! for thy tread is on an Empire's dust."

It was a thrilling moment to me, lover of peace as I am. I had read nearly every description which had been written of the strife, and had often traced the maps and plans indicating the relative positions of the two armies at different periods of the day. I had examined with the deepest interest captain Siborne's model, with its accurate exhibition of localities, and its countless figures of men and horses. And I had gazed on sir William Allan's battle-piece, in which he had done all that art could accomplish to depict the grand crisis of the deadly fight. But not until now did I thoroughly appreciate what Waterloo *was* when opposing hosts met in deadly conflict, and what Waterloo *is* since it has become like Marathon or other great battle-fields of the world—a place of pilgrimage to successive generations. The eye, I found, was indeed the best instructor, and I needed little more than the broken Anglo-French of the young guide to point out the leading positions, to recall what I had read, and speedily to comprehend the whole. Once for all let me say, that for a true and full conception of a great battle the spot itself must be visited. It was not till Haydon had himself stood here, that he, notwithstanding the vivacity and power of his imagination, was able to give to the world his magnificent picture of "THE HERO AND HIS HORSE." The season of the year at which our visit was made was very favourable to the vivid realization of the past. It was the summer time now as it had been then, and it was also the same month of the year. The hills and valley waved as they did in 1815, with crops fast ripening in the sun. According to the tradition of the peasants, the ground, for many years after the battle, was far more fruitful than before; justifying the exclamation:—

"How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!"

A strong impression was made on my mind by the strange and saddening silence of the field. It was difficult to realize that here, for more than eight hours, the earth trembled and the heavens were rent with the vollied thunder of 400 pieces of artillery. And not less difficult was it at first to summon before the mind's eye, on the one hand, the serried hosts drawn up on opposing heights, or commingling in the strife; and on the other, to believe that this was the vast sepulchre where tens of thousands of foes lay peacefully in the dust together. Yes! it is a lonely scene, and

the few straggling tourists over the roads and fields only make the heart more desolate.

And now, standing at the cross roads already mentioned, the eye first sweeps the horizon, and then rests on objects near at hand. Here there are two ridges separated from each other by a narrow valley about a mile and a half long. Along the crest of yonder opposite ridge were ranged the French cavalry and infantry, and thence were they launched by their master's orders, from time to time, on the columns and squares of the British, drawn up to the right and left of the place where we stand. Yonder, in the centre of the French position, on the high road leading to Genappe, is the white-washed farmhouse of La Belle Alliance, near which Napoleon, toward the close of the day, seated on his white charger, directed the final and disastrous charge of his veteran grenadiers, (raising his arm as they passed, and pointing towards the high road to Brussels); and there, a few hours after, Wellington and Blücher met in the bright moonlight, and shook hands in mutual congratulation. And see there, in the valley to the left of the road, is a ploughed field, the place where, as the guide tells us, the gallant sir William Ponsonby fell, pierced by the Polish lancers, and beneath that black grave-like loam (we shudder as we hear it) there are laid the bones of 20,000 men!

Drawing in the eye to nearer objects immediately before us, what is this peaceful-looking cottage, nestling with its orchard in front and its small garden in the rear, beneath the hill? Why, this is the famous farmhouse of La Haye Sainte, (the Holy Hedge,) so fiercely assaulted and so resolutely defended—the key of the left of the British position. We shall pay it a visit by-and-by. Meantime look again and mark, behind the farm-house garden on the knoll, the monument of sir William Gordon, Wellington's favourite aide-de-camp, who in this spot received his death-wound. On the other side of the road, what means that pillar? It is a columnar trophy to the memory of the German legion, who perished here in hundreds. And now listen to the guide as he says, pointing to the right corner of the cross-road on which you stand: "Here stood Wellington's tree!" Stood! why is it not standing still? It is long since cut down, sold to a London tradesman for 100*l.*, and its wood, like that of the "Royal George," made up into snuff-boxes and other articles, now widely dispersed as *souvenirs* of Waterloo. Here, then, grew the tree near which Wellington sat on his favourite charger Copenhagen, at a time when the fight was hottest, coolly remarking to his somewhat nervous staff, as the balls fell fast around, grazing the trunk and sweeping through the branches, "*Sharp practice, gentlemen!*" It was indeed "*sharp practice*;" few of the duke's staff, if any, escaped from that terrible field unhurt, and many of the number were killed. How strange to find the sense of danger so entirely overcome by the excitement of the scene and a daring spirit of adventure, that several persons, dressed in plain clothes, were observed riding in Wellington's train as he passed down the line on the morning of the battle, and were afterwards seen in different parts of the field! When the Enniskillen dragoons were dashing down on the columns of the French, as the latter were making their first

attack on the left, "a gentleman in plain clothes called out to the dragoons, 'Go along, my boys! now's your time.' It was the late duke of Richmond, come out merely as an amateur, and to see how his ball guests and his three sons on the field were faring."*

And now, ere we leave this spot, look along that narrow road to the left. On the crest of the ground overhanging it, across it, and behind the hedge which fenced it in front, were the best and bravest of Wellington's troops drawn up. Again the voice of the guide rings out, as he points you to that field in front of the road, where the French squadrons charged about two o'clock, and where their splendid chivalry was shattered to pieces by the combined cavalry charge under Picton: "Yonder, Picton was killed." It was indeed yonder that, as he cried, "Charge, charge, hurra!" a ball penetrated his forehead, and in a moment he died. There, too, a little farther to the left, fought those soldiers of the 92nd and 42nd Highlanders, who had survived the charges of Ney's cavalry at Quatre Bras; and here it was, moreover, after a concentrated and destructive volley thrown in by the advancing French, that the Scotch Greys came up, and the Highlanders opening to let them pass, the enemy was driven down the heights with great slaughter, two eagles being captured and a host of prisoners. It is well known in what terms of admiration Napoleon himself spoke repeatedly of the Scotch Greys, almost expressing regret that they must be destroyed. As for the Highland infantry, too, their valour was as great on the field as their gentleness was conspicuous after all was over. Many of them, it will be remembered, when billeted at Brussels after the fight, took charge of the little children in the houses where they were billeted, rocking their cradles while the mothers were absent for a time.

One glance more and we leave the spot where we have made so long a pause. Following the hand of the guide, we look again to the left until the eye rests on the woods of Frichermont on the edge of the horizon. Thence, as we are reminded, the Prussians, marching all day from Wavre, debouched in the afternoon of the 18th, driving in the French right, and storming and carrying in succession those little villages of La Haye and Papelotte, which you see in the intervening valley, and sweeping with irresistible fury along the heights, so as to ensure the triumph of the combined army.

Our party now moves on to the right. On the centre of the ridge, in front of the road to Braine Lalland, (where Lord Hill's troops were ranged on the morning of the battle,) rises up between us and the western horizon, a vast mound, and on its top the figure of a lion with uplifted paw placed on a globe of stone. Somehow the impression made by this "lion" mound was not pleasant, and I still think that its erection is to be regretted for several reasons. Although the battle was fought on the territories of the then king of Holland, and the mound is placed over the spot where the brave prince of Orange received a wound in the shoulder, still the Belgian lion on the top of it appears to an Englishman as a creature "having

* Cotton's "Voice from Waterloo,"

no business there;" indeed, as many of "*les braves Belges*" ran away, and at all events, as it was a British force, led by a British general, which won the day, it is the British not the Belgian lion which ought to look down upon the plain. But even passing over this, what grieved me most was to find that the features of the British position have been materially altered from their original aspect, by the cutting away of the ground to the depth of several yards, in order to erect the mound. What need was there, moreover, for any memorial like this? Waterloo, while the world stands, shall be its own dread remembrancer! Still, let us climb that long flight of steps down which some tourists are descending, that we too may have a wider range of view than we have yet enjoyed. But who is this who stops our progress? A youth with a collection of bullets, small eagles from the front of French helmets, and other articles, which he avers have been gathered on the field. Remembering "Murray," and his warnings against impositions, we hesitate about purchasing; but at length a bargain is struck, and the articles are bought for the cabinet of curiosities at home. We give both ourselves and the guide "the benefit of the doubt," and I say to myself: "If these have been 'made to order,' at all events, the *genius loci* seems to invest them with a character of genuineness; and so, too, of this hazel stick. If it has not been 'just cut in the orchard of Hougoumont,' at all events, it must have grown not far from it." Some qualms, however, afterwards arising, we added to our stock of relics from the late serjeant Cotton's well-known museum, before finally leaving Mount St. Jean. Meantime, paying for the stick and the bullets, and the lady of the party being politely presented with a bouquet of wild flowers gathered on the field, we are allowed to move on.

Turning through a gateway, we come to a little cottage which must have sprung up since the battle was fought; and where the kine in the stall within, and the face of the landlord within, remind you that a glass of either milk or wine is at your service, for a consideration. After a toilsome ascent, we reach the top of the mound; and here we find the English guide, a portly serjeant, the successor of the well-known serjeant Cotton, and linger near him, as in sonorous tones and with military precision he points out various scenes in that bloody drama in which he himself was an actor. He is directing the party to the slope on the left of the mound, to the spot where Shaw, the life-guardsmen, fell exhausted with many wounds, with the bodies of nine Frenchmen around him slain by his own hand. And then, loud and rapid, his voice proclaims the story of La Haye Sainte, its capture, and the slaughter of the German troops who occupied it, their ammunition being exhausted, or, as the serjeant said, "the fresh bullets which were supplied them being too large for their muskets." We were half ashamed to listen to a description for which we were not paying, and as the party left the mound, we regretted that we had not (as we advise every reader when he visits Waterloo to do) taken care to be early at Mount St. Jean, and thus secure the services of one who spoke our own tongue, and who was himself a Waterloo man.

Left to our Belgian guide, assisted by several

English strangers, as well as by the recollection of what we had so often read, our eyes turned to the famous chateau of Hougoumont, which formed the main defence of the British right, and against which Napoleon directed his first attack, under the guidance of his brother Jerome. The orchard, the yard, the chateau, the chapel (which had been for a time set on fire), the gateway, whose ponderous door the gallant colonel Macdonnel, assisted by the brave serjeant Graham, had closed against the French—the whole scene of the defence conducted for many hours by Lord Saltoun and colonel Hepburn in succession—all was immediately beneath the eye to the west. Then turning round to the northward, we looked over the narrow road to the meadow where now the sweet-breathing hay was being gathered, and at the corner of which Wellington stood as the French guards, under Ney, ascended those heights in front, about seven o'clock in the evening, and as the Guards lay down before and around him, uttered the brief command to make their final charge.

The rain now began to fall, and the thunder to mutter with a voice like that of a conflict begun. Having descended the mound, we took shelter in the little auberge, where we found a number of strangers. Among these was a family of Americans, father, mother, and several children. Despite the rain, they all rushed towards the mound, resolved to leave nothing unseen. When the shower abated we returned along the cross road already traversed, passing a number of farm-labourers by the way-side. Walking quickly down the steep, we entered the gateway of La Haye Sainte. What a scene of slaughter was here! Over yonder wall and through the gateway to the south, the German riflemen long held their assailants at bay. Retreating to that large barn on the west, they still dealt out death on the foe, till at last, when driven out by its being set on fire, they made their last stand in this cottage and the garden which you can see through the open door, and there all of them (save perhaps one or two who escaped over the wall in the rear) fought from room to room, until the struggle was hushed in the silence of death. The under half of the front door of the farmhouse was removed by the owner soon after the battle, in order to its being preserved as a memorial of the scene. It was completely riddled with balls. But look at that parlour-door to the right; see what perforations and rents are there, and imagine how terrible this hand-to-hand contest, when "no quarter" was the cry, must have been! And now we turn sadly away, and moving out upon the road, our eye falls on the sand-pit opposite, where the riflemen long kept the enemy at bay, but from which they were at last expelled when La Haye Sainte was taken. Towards the close of the battle, this quarry was filled with wounded men, who had taken refuge in it as a shelter from the shot and shells and from the assaults of the cavalry—when, horrible to relate! a body of French cuirassiers were completely overthrown into this quarry by a furious charge of the British, and horses and riders were rolled in death above these unfortunate sufferers. Such are the tremendous woes of war!

And now ascending the steep, our farewell and

final visit is paid, first to the pillar erected in memory of the fallen soldiers of the German legion, having inscribed on it the names of the officers who perished: then crossing the road to the knoll behind the garden of the farmhouse, we read with deep emotion on Gordon's monument, the touching epitaph in which warm home-affections, blighted and bereaved, poured forth their tender coronach of sorrow. At this moment the hoarse thunder burst forth afresh, and as it rolled and echoed over valley and hill, it gave peculiar vividness to my conceptions of that awful day, when, like thickening peals of thunder, the destructive batteries, amid a noise more terrible than the raging tempest,

"From their deep throats
The shot and shells did pour."

As I turned away in sadness, I thought of the duke's impressive and suggestive letter the day after the battle, addressed to the present earl of Aberdeen, announcing the death of his brother, colonel Gordon:—

"I cannot express to you the regret and sorrow with which I look around me, and contemplate the loss I have sustained, particularly in your brother. *The glory resulting from such actions is no consolation to me, and I cannot suggest it as any to you and his friends; but it may be expected that this last one has been so decisive, as that no doubt remains that our exertions and our individual losses will be rewarded by the early attainment of our just object.* It is, then, the glory of the actions in which our friends and relations have fallen that will be some consolation for their loss."

We have written this article with no desire to kindle in our readers a passion for war; far from it. Yet it is only just to remember that Wellington fought at the call of duty—not stimulated by that thirst for glory, or by that lust for conquest, which has made so many great captains the butchers of mankind. As I left the field, I thought of that closing scene which will be fresh in the memory of many a reader. In solemn pomp he had been borne to his resting-place by a grateful nation, of whose freedom he had been the divinely-appointed preserver. I had seen the white plume of his helmet tremble as if instinct with life, as it lay on the coffin-lid and slowly descended out of sight. I had marked how the sovereign's consort and representative was deeply moved; how the old general who had shared with him the perils of conflict dashed away with his hand the starting tear; and now my heart responded afresh to the thrilling words of that solemn dirge which then shook every heart in that silent, breathless throng, gathered beneath the dome of the mighty cathedral: "Know ye not that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel."

THE LONDON BUTCHER-BOY.

A SKETCH.

THE Butcher-boy in London begins life, at about twelve years of age, by taking off his hat. You may suppose, if you like, that in so doing he does it once for all, and makes a ceremonious obeisance all round to society in general, and his master's customers in particular—because he never puts it on again, at least not for several years: if he did,

the first leg of mutton in his tray would kick it off for him. So he goes without a hat, and soon gets in lieu a shining head of hair, glossy with something more wholesome than bear's grease, and, from constant exposure, impenetrable by the moisture and fogs of the atmosphere. He generally wears an apron, and, if in "highly respectable" service, a pair of white sleeves furnished him by his mistress; and he travels the streets with a four-handled tray upon his shoulders, dispensing chops and steaks, cutlets, sweetbreads, and small joints, to the admirers of good cheer in the immediate neighbourhood of his master's shop. Butchers being invariably bountiful in the article of dinner, and fond of seeing everything belonging to them, from the ox in the stall to the cat on the wall, in "good condition," he is sure to be well fed; and soon, whatever may have been his antecedents, he assumes a sleek and ruddy appearance. Being but a mere child, he is (though remember, young reader, loitering in errands often leads to serious consequences,) sometimes not totally indifferent to the charms of taw, and may be caught now and then knuckling down, with his companion the doctor's boy from over the way, in that square patch of waste-ground under the dead wall round the corner—the basket of physic and the tray of steaks and etceteras lying together on the ground awaiting the conclusion of the game. The sight of a stray dog, however, nosing and sniffing among the brick-bats will arouse him at once to a sense of duty; for he knows that—notwithstanding the royal request of Macbeth, to throw physic to the dogs—the dog won't take the physic, and will, if he don't prevent him, take the steaks. Meanwhile, too, a suspicion seizes him that those half-dozen kidneys for No. 14 are wanted for lunch; therefore, pocketing his "stoners," and bidding young Squills good morning, he is off at double quick step to No. 14, where he finds cook in the very act of putting on her bonnet to go in search of the desiderated kidneys. It is not always that he escapes so easily from the consequences of idling, and he begins in time to grow ashamed of such delinquencies. A sense of the importance of his profession steals over him, and he assumes an air of consequence—knocks with the boldness of a postman at your door, exploding the monosyllable "B'tcha-ar" with the full force of his vigorous lungs, and surrendering his charge to your servant as he stands with one arm a-kimbo, like a magnate bestowing largess upon a suppliant.

By the time he has been a year at the trade, he has learned to affect the man in all matters of business, only breaking out into the boy when business hours are over, and he is free for the remainder of the day. Now he is old enough, or experienced enough, which in London is the same thing, to travel for orders, and he comes round at an early hour in the morning to know your pleasure on the subject of dinner. In the execution of this task, which he evidently takes great pleasure in, his demeanor is remarkably civil, and his words as remarkably few: "What to-day, ma'am? Ribs of beef, did you say, ma'am? About five pounds? Yes, ma'am;" and he is off, making a note of it in his memorandum book as he goes along. He is mechanically polite to all, and generally has no extraordinary veneration for any one in particular,

and only knows you as No. 24, or No. something, whatever you may consider of yourself. When everybody has dined, there is but little demand for his services out of doors, and then you may see him in his master's shop of an afternoon, grasping the blade of a cleaver with both hands, and scraping away vigorously at the chopping-block, which it is his boast to keep as clean as a new trencher, and from which he has in the course of the last twelve months skinned off a good inch and half of the solid wood.

Now comes a change in the butcher-boy's dream. The apron and white sleeves have vanished, and he is clad from neck to knees in a blue blouse, and mounted on a scampering "prad" of a pony who flies here and there with amazing velocity. On one arm our new knight-errant carries a rather burly basket of substantial wicker-work, filled with joints of meat, all of which he will deliver within the hour, and some of them at a distance of perhaps half-a-dozen miles away in the suburbs. He gallops wherever he has an opportunity, and scares everybody out of his path by the slashing, race-horse rate at which he devours the way. When his last joint is delivered and his basket is empty, he starts home again at a twelve-mile-an-hour pace, only pulling up to a moderate trot when the crowded streets render such a precaution indispensable. In all this he enjoys himself very much in the manner of a wild huntsman, indulging to the full a sort of nomadic instinct.

The next appearance of our violet-coloured hero is in the butcher's cart, that volatile and dangerously eccentric vehicle, which seems never to know what it is about, which dashes in and out of every turning when you least expect it, and makes you stand suddenly still with a nervous shock, six times at least in your morning's walk, just as you are about to cross the road. Last Monday it was within an inch of knocking down old Mrs. Grundy. On Tuesday morning it nearly upset the maid who was trundling her mop at the grocer's private door. On Wednesday it was within a hair's-breadth of going clean over Mr. Gubbin's toes. On Thursday it all but capsized the doctor's boy; young Squills declares it was "as near as a touch" that he wasn't smashed outright, bottles and all. In short, every day in the week it is within an ace of doing some dreadful deed or other. Master of a beef-eating beast, who, it would seem from his fiery antics, had never learned to walk, and who can only run at a rail-road pace or stand still—the butcher's boy, now amplified into a sturdy and manly-looking stripling, is in the climax of his glory.

A few years of this sort of exercise, coupled with the home experience of the shop, that of the Smith-field market, and the duties of the slaughter-house, soon make a man of him, and then he vanishes from our view. When we meet him next, it is in some neat new shop in the suburbs, where, the

proprietor of a chopping-block of his own, he stands at his door between a couple of scuth-down sheep, promoted to the grade of mutton and hanging hind-legs uppermost on either side of the saw-dusted entrance of his fleshy repository. The hues of health and the smiles of good-humour suffuse his countenance; a bright new steel is dangling from a belt around his waist; he whets his carving-knife instinctively and mechanically as we pass, and with bland voice politely insinuates in our ear the merits of his south-down mutton.

"YOUR FATHERS, WHERE ARE THEY?"

WHERE are they, who, a few short years ago,
Peopled this busy world, and in the strife
Of human toil and passion, joy and woe,
Discussed their parts upon the stage of life?
All, all departed, while their hopes and fears
Lie buried in the abyss of bygone years.

They sojourned here, and in this changing dream
Passed the brief moments of their fleeting day:
As shadows flit across the mountain stream,
Rest for a little while, then pass away,
So mortal man, his earthly mission o'er,
Slips from the platform, and is seen no more.

Where is the beating heart, that throbbled with pain,
Bounded with joy, or burned with jealous ire,
The enterprising mind, the active brain,
Wild and insatiate in their vast desire—
Where are they now? go, ask the silent earth,
Who bore them on her breast, and gave them birth.

Where lies the statesman—he, whose giant mind
Planned its vast schemes of enterprise and might,
Who left his meaner fellows far behind,
And smiled upon them from his dizzy height?
To quell *thy* force, oh death! his glowing strain
Of fire and eloquence alike were vain.

Where the proud warrior, who, with flashing eye,
Marshalled his hosts upon the teated plain,
Then led them forth to fame and victory,
And waved his laurels o'er the valiant slain?
His arm is powerless now; a nation weeps;
Now in his narrow bed the hero sleeps.

The hoary miser, gloating o'er his gold,
Must leave his hoarded treasure, and depart:
Though vast his glittering store, his wealth untold,
The shaft of death must quiver in his heart.
Gold cannot purchase life, death takes no bribe,
But claims his prey from every state and tribe.

Beauty must fade before thy chilling breath,
And talent wither when thy form appears,
Great arbiter of life! relentless death!
The same grim tyrant through unnumbered years;
No throb of pity moves thine icy heart,
When thy stern voice exclaims, Depart, depart!

Yet art thou conquered! When a Saviour broke
The iron chains that bound his sacred clay,
Of life unquenchable his victory spoke;
For death, he gave us *immortality*.
This hope shall cheer us through life's shadowy gloom,
And gild the shrouded portal of the tomb.

M. J. H. P.

